**Needs Assessment Plan**

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County

February 27, 2015

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# Introduction

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is a collaboration between The Arc Greater Twin Cities (The Arc) and the Sexual Violence Center (SVC). The U.S. Department of Justice’s Office on Violence Against Women funded this collaboration in 2013. The Arc works with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and SVC works with people who have been subjected to sexual violence. Together we focus on people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are victims of sexual violence in Hennepin County.

The purpose of Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is to gain a better understanding between The Arc and SVC about our missions, programming and services, staffing, and organizational culture, as well as our limitations. This in-depth planning process allows for our organizations to continue to develop a collaboration that will result in lasting, effective, and sustainable change. Our work focuses on the services at both organizations learning from each other to empower victims of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the skills and resources they need to heal from sexual violence. We are committed that victims of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities get support from people who believe and empower them.

The following is our needs assessment plan, which outlines how we will gather information from people who have used services at either The Arc or SVC. The information we collect will look at successes and barriers to creating services that are welcoming, safe, and accessible for survivors, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Based on the findings from the needs assessment, we will create a strategic plan for this project to help The Arc and SVC best serve people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence.

## Collaboration Structure

### Member Organizations

#### The Arc Greater Twin Cities

The Arc informs, assists, and advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities like Down syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and other conditions. The Arc works in seven metro counties: Hennepin, Ramsey, Anoka, Carver, Scott, Washington, and Dakota.

#### SVC

SVC educates, raises awareness, pushes for systems change, and directly supports victims of sexual violence of any disability status who are at least 12 years old. SVC works in three metro counties: Hennepin, Carver, and Scott.

### Mission

Our collaboration will build our agencies’ capacities and identify opportunities to strengthen and align our practices to support victims/survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their communities. We will work together to foster trauma-informed services that empower victims/survivors with the skills and resources they need to heal from the effects of sexual violence.

### Vision

Our collaboration envisions a person-centered, trauma-informed, fully accessible system of services provided by people who are confident and capable of supporting persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities affected by sexual violence. We will create a community approach that rejects victim hierarchies and ensures that victims/survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities are believed, empowered, and supported.

### Values

The collaboration between The Arc and the SVC is based on shared values. We affirm that everyone has the right to be fully included in the community and feel safe. We share our support for the following rights and values.

We believe that everyone has the **right to autonomy and self-determination**. This means thateveryone has the right to live, learn, work, play, make decisions, and be involved in relationships in the safest and most accessible setting in any way they choose.

We believe that everyone has the **right to accessibility**. We affirm that everyone should have equal physical access as well as equal access to written and spoken information.

We believe that everyone has the **right to safety**. This includes freedom from sexual violence. We believe that everyone has the right to define what safety means for them.

## Project Progress

Our collaboration has completed a collaboration charter and focus memo. The next step in our process is developing this needs assessment plan, which outlines how we will get information from people who have used services at either The Arc or SVC. We will follow the needs assessment plan to collect information about the strengths and challenges in creating safe, welcoming, and accessible services for survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. We will use this information to create a strategic plan for improving services for victims/survivors of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities at both agencies.

## Needs Assessment

The overarching purpose[[1]](#footnote-1) of the needs assessment is to:

* Provide practical information on services for survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities and how to improve them;
* Inform our selection of implementation activities; and
* Increase buy-in and support for our collaboration’s work.

### Needs Assessment Goals

We are taking the opportunity presented by our focus groups and interviews to engage with people who have been impacted by the issues of concern to our collaboration. We will take to heart the feedback they provide, understanding that their unique perspectives and experiences give them insight that is not available to collaboration committee members.

Throughout the needs assessment for both SVC and The Arc, we will:

1. Identify current organizational structures, barriers, and gaps with regard to policies, procedures, and practices at The Arc and SVC that address how to respond to, serve, and support victims/survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Identify what supports and limits exist in each organization’s culture to respond to and address staff’s ability to provide a safe, accessible, person-centered and responsive service delivery system for victims/survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
3. Identify what works and what barriers exist in each organization to ensure accessibility, safety, and responsiveness through the lens of sexual violence and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

# Methods and Information Sources

## Existing Data

We are fortunate to be able to draw from the work of other OVW-funded collaborations addressing gender violence and people with disabilities. We can also refer to the 2014 report created by Hennepin County’s Sexual Assault Multi-disciplinary Action Response Team (SMARTeam), “Assessing the Sexual Assault System Response in Hennepin County: A Community Needs Assessment.”

### Agency Data Sources

This data is specific to our two agencies and comes from our collaboration’s focus area of Hennepin County.

#### Hennepin County SMARTeam

Hennepin County’s SMARTeam is devoted to coordinating county improvements and changes to the systems involved in responding to sexual assault, including prosecution, law enforcement, medical personnel, corrections, and advocacy. The Arc and SVC are both member organizations and both contributed “Calls to Action" to the 2014 report that highlight what each agency does, its successes and challenges when responding to sexual assault, and what it would like to do moving forward. We can use this information to supplement the data we collect from our focus groups, interviews, and indicators.

### Local Data Sources

Our state has had a number of OVW-funded collaborations addressing gender violence against people with disabilities. Navigating North Star Journeys, a collaboration the Twin Cities metro area, is particularly pertinent. We may also find materials produced by other local collaborations helpful. These collaborations include Advoca+e, a collaboration between DayOne and CSD (Communication Services for the Deaf) which was funded at the same time as us, and MAPS (Minnesota Accessing Paths to Safety), a collaboration between the Minnesota Coalition for Battered Women, the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault, the Minnesota Indian Women’s Sexual Assault Coalition, and the Minnesota Disability Law Center.

#### Navigating North Star Journeys

One of the most recent, nearest, and most relevant sources of data comes from the collaboration between Tubman and the Brain Injury Alliance of Minnesota. First funded in 2009, Navigating North Star Journeys has since created a guide to identifying barriers and creating accommodations and written a service manual and guide to understanding the intersection of brain injury and domestic violence. Because brain injury can create cognitive impairments that are similar to intellectual disabilities, their work will be an important resource during our strategic plan.

Navigating North Star Journeys was also kind enough to share their Needs Assessment Plan and Report with us. We anticipate finding many similar results during our assessment—some of which we may be able to recognize and characterize more easily, thanks to the descriptions already created in Navigating North Star Journeys’ work.

### National Data Sources

Other resources include materials developed by other grantee collaborations and the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence. The sources listed below come from collaborations similar to our own.

#### Project SAFE (Safe Access for Everyone)

The collaboration in Suffolk County, New York was made up of VIBS (Victims Information Bureau of Suffolk) Family Violence and Rape Crisis Center and the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Suffolk, Inc. Cerebral palsy is a developmental disability, and The Arc provides services to people with this condition. We will be able to use this information in similar ways to the information from Navigating North Star Journeys.

#### Domestic Violence & Mental Health Collaboration Project

While the King County, Washington collaboration is focused on psychiatric disabilities (mental illnesses) rather than intellectual and/‌or developmental disabilities, and domestic violence rather than sexual violence, their needs assessment is informative for our own work. Their comprehensive discussion addressing issues of intersectionality makes their report uniquely pertinent to our collaboration, as intersectionality is one of our collaboration’s core commitments and interests. Additionally, some victims/‌survivors have a dual diagnosis of one or more mental illnesses in addition to intellectual and developmental disabilities. Some people with psychiatric disabilities also experience symptoms that overlap with impairments present in certain intellectual and developmental disabilities, meaning that both groups may face someof the same barriers to services.

#### Hope Collaborative

The Hope Collaborative of Haywood County, North Carolina has created an Accessibility and Safety Audit tool that we can use in our needs assessment. Their collaboration, which included The Arc of Haywood County, was funded in 2007.

#### Other Collaborations

Additional resources may prove useful for our needs assessment, including materials provided by Illinois Imagines (statewide), Intersections (Boulder and Bloomfield Counties of Colorado), and others.

### Academic Data Sources

There is a great deal of information available from academic sources that could be relevant to our work. Many academic journal issues, for example, have been thematically geared toward the topic of violence against people with disabilities, but there is neither space in our Needs Assessment nor time in our project to review this body of literature.

## New Data: Indicators

The Vera Institute for Justice will provide us with a Performance Indicator Measurement System as a means of assessing organizations’ capacity and commitment to serve survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities. With the indicators, we will be able to determine a baseline from which we can measure the improvements we make during the implementation phase of our grant. The indicators, which are newly available this year, will replace the focus groups, interviews, and surveys for staff, boards, and volunteers that have been used by past collaborations to make these assessments.

## New Data: Focus Groups and Optional Interviews

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County will primarily use focus groups for gathering information from people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, victims/survivors of sexual violence, and parents and guardians who have used services at The Arc. We believe that this is the most efficient way to effectively engage larger groups of individuals in a short period of time. We also believe that a focus group setting will help to generate a diverse range of ideas and perspectives.

We recognize that speaking in a group setting may be uncomfortable for some people for reasons such as lack of privacy or discomfort in a group setting. Therefore, Accessing Safety Hennepin County will offer all participants the option of participating in individual interviews rather than focus groups if they prefer. We will explain this clearly during the recruitment process (see the Recruitment Scripts: Appendix B).

### Structure of Focus Groups

#### Audiences

##### Survivors of Sexual Violence

We will engage sexual violence survivors who are or have been clients of the Sexual Violence Center. We believe that sexual violence survivors are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. It is imperative to ask them directly what their own personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations safer and more trauma-informed. Because the strategic plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is critical that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our organizational changes.

By engaging survivors of sexual violence, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix G):

* What makes a service provider approachable, safe, and comfortable, and what, if any, any barriers to services were encountered;
* The best methods of outreach to alert survivors of services;
* The importance and value of confidentiality as a safety tool;
* The best practices for serving survivors (including staff behavior, knowledge, and skills); and
* How trauma impacts someone’s approach to seeking services.

##### People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

We will be engaging people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have received services from The Arc. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities are vital to the needs assessment process. We believe that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities are the experts of their own experience and have the power to represent their own needs and expectations. As a result, it is imperative to ask them directly what their personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations more comfortable, accessible, and disability-aware. Because the strategic plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is important that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our organizational changes.

By engaging people with disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix G):

* What makes a service provider accessible and comfortable for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
* The best methods of outreach to alert people with intellectual and developmental disabilities about accessible and disability-informed services;
* The best practices for serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (including staff behavior, knowledge, and skills);
* What service providers need to know about informed consent and best practices for obtaining informed consent from people with disabilities.

##### Parents and Guardians of People with I/‌DD

We will engage parents and guardians who have received services from The Arc. Parents and guardians who have received services from The Arc are vital to the needs assessment process. A majority of people accessing services through The Arc are advocating on behalf of a person with an intellectual and developmental disability. Because of the high number of parents and guardians that The Arc serves, it is important to ask them directly what their personal experiences are when receiving services so that we may make our organizations more comfortable, accessible, and disability-aware. Because the strategic plan will ultimately influence the way services and supports are provided, it is crucial that we ask the individuals who will be most impacted by our organizational changes.

By engaging parents and guardians of people with disabilities, we hope to gain information about the following (for questions, see Appendix G):

* What makes a service provider accessible and comfortable for parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities;
* The best methods of outreach to alert parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities about accessible and disability-informed services;
* The best practices for serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (including staff behavior, knowledge, and skills).

##### Focus Group and Interview Plan

| **Focus groups** |
| --- |
| ***Audience Type*** | ***Number of Potential Participants*** | ***From which organization?*** |
| Sexual violence survivors  | 6-16(3-8 per group) | SVC |
| People with intellectual and developmental disabilities  | 6-16(3-8 per group) | The Arc |
| Parents of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities | 8-12(1 focus group) | The Arc |

| **Interviews** |
| --- |
| ***Audience Type*** | ***Number of Potential Participants*** | ***From which organization?*** |
| Sexual violence survivors  | 0-3 | SVC |
| People with intellectual and developmental disabilities | 0-3 | The Arc |
| Parents of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities | 0-3 | The Arc |

#### Overview of Structures and Key Roles for Focus Groups and Interviews

##### Focus Group and Optional Interview Procedure

Focus groups and interviews will involve a moderated discussion using open-ended questions that are unique for each audience and based on the goals of that particular group (see Appendix G for all questions).

###### Focus Groups

The focus groups will be facilitated by a consultant. Each focus group will have an assistant, facilitator, and note taker. (See below for additional information on roles.) At all focus groups, a trained sexual assault advocate will be available to provide support as needed (see below for a description of the advocate role).[[2]](#footnote-2)

###### Interviews

Each optional interview will have a facilitator and note taker present and an advocate available as needed. (See below for additional information on roles.) Interviews will not have an assistant.

Additionally, a list of free SVC services and other local community resources will be available at all focus groups and interviews should someone need information on where to obtain support. (Appendix H).

##### Key Roles

The following are descriptions of each role involved in the focus groups and optional interviews. All volunteers not on the collaboration committee in these roles will participate in a brief training that includes:

* An overview of the grant and the needs assessment process
* An overview of the role and expectations
* Training on the specific requirements of the role
* How to manage special circumstances: safety, reporting requirements, accommodations, and facilitating connection to advocate support
* Our collaboration’s values around confidentiality as a priority

###### Facilitator

The facilitator will be a hired consultant. The consultant will have experience in group facilitation and interviewing techniques. The facilitator will:

* Welcome participants and introduce the other people conducting the meeting.
* Review general housekeeping details and address safety and confidentiality issues using the script created by the collaboration prior to getting into the pre-created questions and prompts. (See Appendix F for all facilitation scripts.)
* Keep the discussion in-line with the questions and will intervene quickly in cases of possible arguments or personal disclosures. (See Appendix G for all questions.)
* For all focus groups and interviews, the facilitator will be responsible for keeping track of the time.

###### Assistant (for focus groups only)

The primary responsibilities of the assistant are to ensure the facilitator and note taker have what they need to conduct the meeting, and to attend to any comfort and safety requests of participants. Responsibilities include:

* Be responsible for insuring that people feel the environment is comfortable and safe, and understand that they can leave at any time.
* Assist with food (if applicable) and room set-up and ensure that focus group participants feel safe and comfortable.
* If anyone wants access to an advocate or their own personal care attendant, the assistant will escort them out of the room and connect them with support.
* Assist with keeping track of time when not assisting individual participants.

###### Note Taker

A project director will be the note taker at all focus groups and optional interviews. The note taker will:

* Objectively take notes of the discussion on a laptop computer.
* Set up recording equipment, record all focus groups and optional interviews, and ensure that recordings are handled properly after each session concludes.
* Not participate in the discussion and will sit in a part of the room that will be the least distracting for participants when possible.
* Document what each person says without paraphrasing and will document when emotions such as frustration, anger, or happiness are expressed. The note taker may ask that something said be repeated by raising their hand.
* Not be linking any information shared to specific participants and will exclude any identifying information other than which organization and type of group they are from.
* Be responsible for insuring that all written information and notes are kept in a safe and confidential place (see Confidentiality on page 28).
* At the end of each focus group/optional interview, the note taker will facilitate a debriefing session with the facilitator to jointly identify themes, significant comments, and new information related to the goals of the needs assessment.
* Be responsible for translating all notes into “note summaries,” which will be provided to collaboration team members.

###### Advocate

A sexual assault advocate will be available at focus groups and interviews to provide emotional support both during or following the session. The advocate will:

* Be in a separate accessible, private space to ensure confidentiality and safety;
* Be trained to support both primary and secondary survivors, including people with intellectual and/‌or developmental disabilities;[[3]](#footnote-3) and
* Have materials that list free SVC services and other local resources.

# Recruitment Plan

## Recruitment Methods

The following is an explanation for the methods that we will use to recruit each group we will be engaging. For all groups, the project co-directors will be performing all recruitment methods. Given the potential safety risks involved when recruiting survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the preferred method of recruitment for these populations is in-person recruitment.

### Survivors

Participants for all focus groups and optional interviews will be survivors who have used SVC services within the past five years. We chose to limit participants to those who have used services in the past five years because of the notable changes at SVC that have occurred within the past several years. Participants will be recruited by contact at support groups, flyers posted at SVC, and a Facebook announcement facilitated by the project co-directors (Appendix A). The recruitment materials will include an RSVP form (Appendix D) that will list all accommodation options, and invitees will be instructed to complete the form and give it back to the recruiter directly.

When handing out flyers at support groups, we will ask each individual if they would like to take the flyer. We will assure the group that no one is required to take the flyer if they do not feel safe to do so.

All people served will be assured that participation is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

### People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Participants for all focus groups and optional interviews of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be recruited by individual face-to-face conversations and targeted phone calls to individuals who have used services at The Arc in the past two years. We chose to limit participants to those who have used services in the past two years to regulate the number of contacts the project co-directors will make due to The Arc’s large database of service users. Recruitment will be facilitated by the project co-directors (Appendices A-B). Individuals who have used services in the past two years will be identified using The Arc’s client database. The recruitment materials will include an RSVP form (Appendix D) that will list all accommodation options, and invitees will be instructed to complete the form themselves or with the recruiter’s assistance and give it back to the recruiter directly.

All people served will be assured that participation is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

### Parents and Guardians of People with I/‌DD

Participants for the focus group and optional interviews of parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be recruited by individual face-to-face conversations and targeted phone calls to individuals who have participated in programs and/or used services at The Arc in the past two years. We chose to limit participants to those who have used services in the past two years to regulate the number of contacts the project co-directors will make due to The Arc’s large database of service users. Participants will be recruited by the project co-directors (Appendix B). The recruitment materials will include an RSVP form (Appendix D) that will list all accommodation options, and invitees will be instructed to complete the form and give it back to the recruiter directly.

All people served will be assured that participation is optional and the decision whether or not to participate will not impact their service provision in any way.

## Recruitment Process

The recruiter will follow the recruitment scripts that have been specifically designed for the intended audience (see Appendix B: Recruitment Scripts on page 40). The recruiter will:

* Explain the purpose of the focus group/interview and the overall goal of the collaboration.
* Alert the invitee of mandated reporting requirements (see pages 41 and 64).
* Review the recruitment materials, including the RSVP form and Frequently Asked Questions (see Appendices C-D).
* For all activities for survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities: Discuss what compensation they will receive (see Incentives on pages 45 and 52).
* Review the date, time, and location of the interview or focus group.
* Review accommodation options (see RSVP Form on page 24 for a complete list: Appendix D.)
* Confirm whether or not the individual is willing to participate.
* Offer an individual interview for those that do not want to participate in a focus group. If the invitee prefers an individual interview, the recruiter will have a list of pre-selected dates/times and ask that the invitee select the date/time that works best for them. The recruiter will ensure that this date/time is listed on the RSVP form.
* Answer any additional questions.

All recruiters are to contact the project directors by email with the responses of invitees. The recruiters will submit the RSVP forms to the project directors within 48 hours of contact with the invitee.

## Recruitment Tools

Recruiters will utilize the following tools during recruitment. For anyone needing assistance, the recruiter will read aloud all documents.

### RSVP Form

All invitees will receive an RSVP form (Appendix D). The RSVP form will ask for the invitee’s first name, if they want to participate in the needs assessment process, how they’d like to participate (focus group/optional interview), and what accommodations they may need. Names collected from the RSVP forms will only be utilized to connect participants with their requested accommodations.

The project director based at The Arc will be the point person for tracking of all RSVP responses and accommodation requests for all focus groups and interviews. Forms will be kept in a locked drawer at The Arc when not in use and will be destroyed within three business days after the focus group/interview meeting. Only first names of participants will be collected. By only collecting first names, we will avoid collecting any identifying information that may trigger a mandatory report, as the names will only be viewed by the project directors and will not be linked to any information shared by participants during the focus groups.

Recruiters will provide people who are recruited in person with an RSVP form for them to complete the form while the recruiter is present. The recruiter will go through each section of the RSVP form, explaining what is needed and ensuring that invitees understand what they are being asked. For those invited via email, the RSVP form will be attached to the email, and it will be requested that they email back the RSVP form by a stated due date.

### Frequently Asked Questions Sheet

The FAQ sheet will answer general questions about what focus groups/optional interviews will entail (Appendix C). This sheet will be provided to all participants during the recruitment process. For survivors, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and parents and guardians, we will let them know during recruitment that we are taking all forms back at the end of the recruitment process. However, recruits will be able to keep the FAQ sheet if they so choose.

### Meeting Reminder Cards

Because we recognize that participants may want a meeting reminder, we will provide all invitees with the option of taking a meeting reminder card with them (Appendix E). This card will be the size of a business card and will only list the project director based at The Arc’s first name, contact phone number, and a blank space to fill in the date/time of the meeting. The phone number listed will be to the project director’s direct voicemail and not state anything about the project or sexual violence on the voicemail recording. The location of the meeting, information on The Arc, our collaboration name, and more information on the project director will not be included.

### Compensation

During all focus groups for survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, Accessing Safety in Hennepin County will provide light refreshments. Funding is not approved for providing parents and guardians with refreshments. The project directors will make accommodations for any food/drink restrictions and requirements as needed.

We will provide survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities $20 gift cards to cover their time and travel to the focus group/interview. Again, funding is not approved for compensating parents and guardians. At the beginning of each focus group/optional interview with survivors and people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, during the check-in process with each individual participant the note taker will give the participant a $20 Visa gift. Participants will be told during recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group/optional interview that a gift card will be provided to them. If they prefer not to take it with them, the project director will keep it for them until the end of the focus group/‌interview session. Individuals will also be told that they can discontinue their participation at any time during the focus group/optional interview without losing their gift card.

The note taker will count the number of participants and gift cards given out and keep a record of the time and date for potential auditing requirements. The facilitator will sign off that this number is correct after each focus group/optional interview as a witness and to ensure accuracy.

# Affirmative Consent Process

We will be using an affirmative consent process for all focus groups and optional interviews. An affirmative consent method is consistent with recent California State legislation that can be summarized as “yes means yes” for consent. We have chosen a verbal affirmative consent strategy because it is person-centered, provides for more confidentiality of participants, prevents a paper trail, and eliminates time spent on administrative matters in the session itself. Affirmative consent will be clearly outlined in the facilitator’s opening remarks (Appendix F). Participants will be told they can leave or discontinue at any time. It will be affirmed that participation is completely voluntary. There are no consequences if someone refuses to participate or stop their participation at any time. Once the remarks have been read, it will be asked that participants give a verbal or physical indication that they agree. Obtaining verbal or physical indication of agreement ensures that participants understand what is being asked. Participants of focus groups and interviews are agreeing to:

* Participate in a focus group/interview;
* Have their comments anonymously recorded and documented in writing;
* Have their comments anonymously used in the needs assessment report; and
* Have their comments anonymously used for developing the collaboration’s strategic plan and implementation activities.

# Confidentiality

## Confidentiality Process: Preserving Confidentiality

The following information outlines the specific considerations we have made to preserve confidentiality.

* Personally identifying information will only be collected during the RSVP process when individuals will be asked their first name for the purpose of linking them with their accommodations and contact information to provide optional meeting reminders. The project director based at The Arc will keep a list of any people who request accommodations and their first names. This information will be brought to each focus group/optional interview as needed, and will be destroyed within three business days following the focus group/interview. The project director based at The Arc will keep RSVP forms for those who request a meeting reminder call or email only until a reminder is made. Immediately after, the project director will destroy the RSVP form.
* The number of participants who attend focus groups and interviews will be combined for the needs assessment report. No other RSVP information will be combined or shared.
* In focus groups and optional interviews, participants will be asked not to provide any identifying information about themselves, specific staff, or program participants (see Appendices B and F for recruitment and facilitation scripts). The note taker will omit any inadvertent disclosures made by participants.
* The recruiters who receive the RSVP forms will keep them in a sealed envelope while they have it. The recruiter will contact the project director based at The Arc after every recruitment session and coordinate with the project director to arrange for RSVP pickup within three business days of recruiting.
* All RSVPs will be destroyed within three business days after each focus group/optional interview.
* There will be no adverse consequences for services due to any information shared.
* Focus group participants will be asked to keep confidential any information discussed or shared during the focus group with anyone who did not participate in their specific focus group. Additionally, participants will be asked to not discuss what is said in the group with other group participants once the group is over. However, because we cannot ensure that participants preserve confidentiality, participants will also be encouraged to be mindful of what they share.
* The note taker will not link personal identifying information, including but not limited to names, to comments made during any focus groups or interviews.
* The final needs assessment report will identify trends, barriers, and strengths linked to what each organization and group as a whole stated during the needs assessment process in summary form. In order to make systemic changes at collaborative organizations, it is imperative to identify strengths, challenges, and needs to enrich the development of our strategic plan.
* Any information gathered through the needs assessment process will be kept by the project director based at The Arc in a locked cabinet and stored in password-protected computer that only the project director and the collaboration team member from The Arc has access to.
* In the event that there is an emergency preventing the project director based at The Arc from accessing these documents, the collaboration team member from The Arc will also have access to the file cabinet key.
* The note taker will provide collaboration team members with summaries of the focus groups and interviews. The note taker will be identifying themes, patterns, and issues that emerge utilizing the facilitator and assistant following each focus group and interview to ensure all information is captured and consistent.
* Draft copies of the needs assessment report will be kept in a locked cabinet and stored in password protected computers that only the collaboration team members have access to.
* The report will not be shared with anyone outside of the collaboration until it has been reviewed by the collaboration and the Vera Institute of Justice and approved by the Office on Violence Against Women.
* All notes, records, and anything else in writing that is related to the needs assessment will be destroyed after the strategic plan has been approved by Office on Violence Against Women and representatives from The Arc and SVC have signed off on it.
* If any confidentiality concerns arise that are not addressed above, we will consult our technical advisor.

## Mandatory Reporting

Mandatory reporting information will be discussed with participants during recruitment and at the beginning of focus groups and optional interviews to ensure participants understand their rights. The recruiter/facilitator will tell participants that a mandated reporter will be in the room during their focus group or interview. We have developed the needs assessment plan and the focus groups/interview questions to minimize the likelihood of disclosures. The intent of the needs assessment is not to gain information on specific experiences of sexual violence; however, this does not mean disclosures will not occur. A mandated reporter will be in the room during focus groups and interviews. Participants will be informed in advance in each recruiter’s written script and during the opening facilitator’s script of opening remarks for the group or interview as a reminder. During the introduction of each needs assessment activity, all participants will be informed of mandatory reporting requirements under Minnesota Statute 626.556. A report will be necessary if it involves a minor who has been physically or sexually abused within the past three years, or if there is more than one minor victimized by the same perpetrator who is not related to the victim within the past ten years. This is for survivors who are now over age 18 but whose abuse occurred when they were minors. A report will also need to be made if a participant states that they are suicidal or that they seriously intend to harm another person.

The facilitator will make all possible efforts to prevent disclosure of sexual violence during focus groups and interviews. Steps taken to limit disclosures include the following:

* Facilitator will state the expectations and purpose of the needs assessment including that the purpose is not to discuss any personal stories of sexual violence.
* Participants who need resources or to speak with someone about their personal experiences will be referred to the assistant.
* Reviewing the reporting requirements for mandatory reporting within state law.
* We will not ask any questions regarding instances of sexual violence or abuse.
* In the event a disclosure is made that needs to be reported, the reporter will wait until the end of the focus group or interview to address this. The reporter will follow SVC policy in honoring their duty to report.

However, if a disclosure is made where there is enough information provided that a report must be made, the mandated reporter will follow SVC policy to address the disclosure.

# Accessibility Considerations

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is committed to providing fully accessible focus groups and interviews for all participants throughout the needs assessment process. To the best of our ability, accessibility will be ensured through the following:

* Accessible space will be used for all focus groups and optional interviews. Focus groups and optional interviews will take place in a space that is commonly used by the participants so that they are already familiar with the space that may already have the accessibility considerations needed. Physically accessible gender-neutral bathrooms will be made available.
* We will provide accommodations for those participating to the best of our ability. The RSVP form for focus groups and optional interviews will include a section to request accommodations. The project director based at The Arc will be responsible to arrange for requested accommodations.
* The facilitator, note taker, assistant, advocate and participants will be asked not to wear perfume or scented lotions.
* Facilitators will be instructed to attend to the particular needs of each audience and speak in a manner that is accessible to all participants.
* All print materials and needs assessment tools will be in accessible formats (plain language, 14 pt. font, compatible with screen readers).
* Because participants’ own Personal Care Attendants (PCAs) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews, the assistant will escort participants requesting their PCA out of the room to meet that individual. If it is determined in advance that a participant will need a PCA during the focus group or interview, we will accommodate this by providing an alternate PCA.
* Questions for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have been written to improve accessibility for those with cognitive disabilities by using concrete examples and plain language.
* For a list of all accommodations invitees can request, please refer to the RSVP form (Appendix D).

# Safety Considerations

Physical and psychological safety are primary considerations of Accessing Safety in Hennepin County. We understand that safety is defined differently for each individual. Every effort will be made to protect the safety of those participating in the needs assessment process. The collaboration will also make every effort to develop tools and processes to maximize the safety of all involved.

During recruitment and at the beginning of each focus group and interview, it will be made clear to participants that:

* Questions are intended to elicit information about The Arc and SVC and the services they provide. Questions are not intended to gather personal experiences related to violence, abuse, or neglect.
* If the discussion of services or service access brings up memories or intense feelings, and if a participant appears likely to disclose, an advocate will be available at each focus group for survivors, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and parents and guardians to provide emotional support for anyone needing it either during or just following the session. A private, accessible space will be made available to ensure confidentiality and safety. Participants will be told that the advocate is available and where the advocate will be located or they can request an escort to the advocate and told they can access SVC services free of charge any time after the focus group/interview.
* Resource cards that list local resources will be made available to anyone requesting one.
* Anyone can discontinue at any point if they are feeling uncomfortable.
* No one has to answer any question that makes them uncomfortable.
* There will be no consequence to services for anyone who chooses to participate or not participate in the needs assessment process.
* No personally identifying information will be linked to those participating in the group other than to provide them with their requested accommodations.
* We will be offering optional individual interviews to anyone who would prefer to participate outside of a group setting.
* Anyone has the option for their gift card to be kept by the project director based at The Arc until the end of the focus group/interview.

Additionally, the following steps will be taken to help ensure safety for all participants:

* The meeting reminder card will not have the location of the meeting or any information linking the meeting to The Arc or SVC. The phone number listed on the card is linked to the confidential voicemail of the project director based at The Arc (see Appendix E).
* We will be asking for the first name of all participants on the RSVP form for the purpose of connecting individuals with their requested accommodations and will not be linked to any individually identifying information.
* We will be asking for contact information from those who request a meeting reminder. This information will be destroyed as soon as the reminder is made prior to the focus group/optional interview.
* Any print materials, signage at focus groups, and optional interviews will not list Accessing Safety in Hennepin County or use language regarding the intersection of sexual violence and intellectual and developmental disabilities.
* An individual’s own Personal Care Attendant (PCA) will not be permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews but will be provided with comfortable accommodations during the focus groups/interviews. However, we will make special accommodations for anyone requiring the assistance of a PCA (see Accommodations on page 51).
* To the best of our ability, sites selected for focus groups and interviews will be where people will feel safe. Mostly, sites will be selected based on where participants already have a routine so as not to bring attention to this group.
* Following the focus group/interview, staff will escort participants to their means of transportation if they so choose.
* We have taken special considerations when selecting the groups we will be engaging, particularly with regard to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and survivors. For example, to avoid triggering crisis, we are not directly contacting specific victims/‌survivors to solicit their participation, opting instead for announcements to focus groups and on SVC’s Facebook page.

# Work Plan

| Activity | Timeframe | Committee Meetings |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Collaboration building; creation of charter; “Narrowing the Focus” memo; reassessment of work plan | December/‌2013-October/‌2014 | 17 total |
| Needs assessment | November/‌2014-April/‌‌2015 | 10-11 total |
| Develop needs assessment plan | November/‌2014-January/‌2015 | 2 total |
| Conduct needs assessment[[4]](#footnote-4)  | February-April/2015 | 4-5 total |
| Compile and analyze data | April-May/‌2015 | 4 total |
| Compose needs assessment report | May/‌2015 | 2 total |
| Strategic Plan | June/‌2015-September/2016 | TBD |
| Develop strategic plan | June-July/‌2015 | 5 total |
| Vera site visit – strategic plan | May/‌2015 | N/A |
| Implementation | June/‌2015-September/2016 | TBD |

Appendices

Needs Assessment Plan

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County

**Note on the Appendices**

The documents included in the appendix are templates. Many of the forms have been combined to reduce repetition. For example, our recruitment scripts for survivors, people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will have small differences between them. The differences for each audience are noted. When using the following documents, we will adapt the document according to the intended audience.

# Recruitment Materials

## Recruitment Flyer for Survivors

Help us improve our services!

SVC is looking for survivors who have used our services within the past five years to participate in anonymous focus groups or individual interviews. We are looking for survivors to share their thoughts so we can do better in creating welcoming, safe, accessible, empowering, and responsive services.

If you are interested in participating, please see or call the project director at SVC, Leah, at 612.871.5100, ext. 24 or lentenmann@sexualviolencecenter.org.

All participants will receive a $20 Visa gift card.

## Recruitment Scripts

### Recruitment Scripts for People with I/‌DD

#### Introduction and Overview

Hello, my name is [*insert* name] and I am the project co-director based at [*The Arc/*SVC]. I want to ask for your help with a special project. Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is a partnership between the Sexual Violence Center and The Arc Greater Twin Cities. You already know about The Arc, so let me tell you about the Sexual Violence Center, or SVC. SVC supports people who are victims of sexual violence. This includes anybody with disabilities and without disabilities, as long as they are age 12 or older. SVC also educates people, raises awareness, and helps make organizations better at responding to sexual violence.

#### Invitation to Participate

I want to invite you to be part of the needs assessment by being in a focus group. A focus group is when people come together and answer questions. The focus group will have between three and eight people with developmental disabilities. We want to learn what makes services you receive welcoming, safe, and accessible.

We want to learn from you what it is like for a person with a developmental disability to get services in the community. Our goal is to make services at both The Arc and SVC empowering, welcoming, safe, and accessible. Your answers and ideas will really help us do that. We will ask you what you think helps you when get services in the community.

#### Our Process

Here are a few things you should know:

* Being in the focus group is completely up to you. None of The Arc’s services that you receive now or will receive in the future will change because of your choice.
* Focus groups will last for about 1½ hours. There will be 3-8 other people answering questions. You may know someone in the group. If this makes you uncomfortable, you can have an individual interview instead.
* The meeting will be on [*day*], [*date*] at [*time*] at [*location*]. You can change your mind about participating at any time.
* You have to agree to be a part of the focus group in order to participate in a focus group. If you come to the focus group, you are telling us that you agree to participate in the focus group. You can leave at any time if you don’t want to participate anymore.
* At the [*focus group*/‌*interview*], you can skip any questions you don’t want to answer.
* The project staff and advocates will keep anything you say confidential. This means that:
	+ There will be someone taking notes on a computer and recording the meeting, but no one will record your name. Your name will not be connected to anything you say. Only the project staff will see the notes or listen to the recordings. After the project is finished, we will delete all of the recordings and tear up all of the notes.
	+ We will make it very clear to everyone in the focus group that it is important to respect people’s privacy. We will tell everyone that they need to keep what you say confidential.

There will be a mandated reporter in the focus group. A mandated reporter is someone who has to make a report to the authorities if they find out that a child is being or has been hurt or that someone is planning to kill or hurt themselves or someone else. The mandated reporter will only make a report if you share information that needs to be reported. If you tell us that you were abused while under the age 18, or if you tell us that you are thinking of hurting yourself or another person, the mandated reporter will have to tell the authorities.

#### Safety

Being in the focus group is completely up to you. We suggest that you do not participate if you think that being in the focus group will make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable. If you want to help but don’t want to be in a group, you may be able to have a one-on-one interview instead.

We will not ask anyone to share personal stories of violence or abuse. The focus will be on your experience in trying to get help and services in the community. If you want to talk to someone for support or for any other reason during or after the group, there will be an advocate whom you can talk to in a private area.

I have a list of frequently asked questions to give you. I will take it back from you unless you say it is safe for you to keep it. The list will have answers to many of the questions you may have. If you have any other questions after today you can contact [*name of the project director from The Arc*]. I will give you her contact information in a moment. Take as long as you need to read through this. I can also help you read it. [*Read FAQ document (see Appendix C) to the individual or let them read through the document.*] Do you have any questions?

#### Registration

I have a sign-up form for focus groups and interviews. [*Hand out RSVP form, then read through the form with the individual*.] We only ask for your first name on the RSVP form. This form will go directly to [*name of the project director from The Arc*], who will keep it locked up at all times to protect your privacy. This way we will know that you are coming and can make sure you get what you need when you arrive at the meeting. The RSVP forms will be torn up right after the meeting. There will be no record that you were there.

It is your choice whether or not you want to participate. If you do want to participate, you can choose to be in a focus group or have an individual interview. It is entirely up to you.

Do you know right now if you want to participate?

##### For Yes Responses

Do you want to be in a focus group or have a one-on-one interview? [*Indicate choice on RSVP form.*]

##### For No Responses

[*Skip to concluding remarks.*]

#### Accommodations

Please tell us how we can make sure you are comfortable at the meeting. If you need a PCA or residential counselor to be in the room to help you during the [*focus group*/*interview*], please tell us now. Your own PCA cannot be in the room with you, so that our conversation can be private. If you want a PCA in the room with you, we can find an alternate PCA to be in the room while your own PCA waits outside the meeting. Only check “PCA” on the RSVP form if you want a PCA in the room with you. [*Review the accommodations section on the RSVP form.*]

#### Meeting Reminder Options

[*Show meeting reminder card.*] If you want, you can have this card to remind you when and where the meeting is. The card has [*name of the project director from The Arc*]’s first name and phone number. You can call her if you have any new questions, or if you want to cancel or reschedule your meeting. [*Name of the project director from The Arc*]’s voicemail is confidential, so you can leave a private message safely. Before you take the card, please think about whether you would feel comfortable if someone saw the card. If someone saw it they might ask you questions about it. Do you want to take a card? [*If the invitee would like the card, complete the date, time, and location of the focus group or interview on the card before handing it to them*.]

#### Incentives

To thank you for participating, we will give you a $20 Visa gift card. There will also be snacks at the meeting.

#### Concluding Remarks

Do you have any other questions? [*Complete and collect RSVP forms.*]

Thank you so much for your time.

### Recruitment Script for Survivors and Parents and Guardians

#### Introduction and Overview

Hello, my name is [*insert* name] and I am the project co-director based at [*The Arc/*SVC]. I want to ask for your help with a special project. Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is a partnership between the Sexual Violence Center and The Arc Greater Twin Cities.

##### For Parents and Guardians

You already know about The Arc, so let me tell you about the Sexual Violence Center, or SVC. SVC educates, raises awareness, advocates for systems change, and directly supports primary and secondary victims of sexual violence of any disability status age 12 and over.

##### For Survivors

You already know about SVC, so let me tell you about The Arc. The Arc informs, assists, and advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities like Down syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and other conditions to achieve full and satisfying lives.

We are conducting an assessment of our services, and we are asking a number of different groups of people to participate, either by being in a focus group or by doing an individual interview. The people we are including in our needs assessment are:

* Survivors who have used services at SVC;
* People with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have used services at The Arc; and
* Parents and guardians of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have used services from The Arc.

We are working on improving services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence. Once we complete the needs assessment, we will share a report with our organizations, funders, and grant guides. After that, we will plan our work improving services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence.

#### Invitation to Participate

I want to invite you to be part of the needs assessment by being in a focus group. The focus group will include between three and eight people, and will be made up of [*survivors/‌parents and guardians*]. We hope to learn what makes services you receive safe, welcoming, safe, and accessible.

##### For Parents and Guardians

The purpose of our focus group with you as a parent or guardian will be to find out what you think is helpful when you are trying to get services in the community on behalf of your child or the person you hold guardianship for. Our goal is to make services at both SVC and The Arc empowering, welcoming, safe, and accessible. Your input as a parent or guardian will be critical in helping us do that.

Although you and your family member/the person you care for may have experienced violence in the past, we will not be talking about that during this meeting. We only want to know what it’s like for you as a caregiver for a person with a disability in seeking services or support in the community.

##### For Survivors

The purpose of our survivor focus group will be to find out what you think is helpful to you when you’re seeking services or support in the community. We will *not* be asking about any specific experiences of sexual violence that you or someone you know has been through.

Our goal is to make services at both SVC and The Arc empowering, welcoming, safe, and accessible. Your input as a survivor will be critical in helping us do that.

#### Our Process

Here are a few things you should know:

* Focus groups will last approximately 1 ½ hours.
* The focus group will have 3-8 people from [*The Arc*/*SVC*]. You may know someone in the group. If this makes you uncomfortable, you may have the option of being offered an individual interview instead.
* The meeting will take place at [*date*/*time*].
* Being in the focus group is completely up to you.
* You can change your mind at any time and decide to not be in the group.
* If you choose to be in a group, you can answer the questions or not answer the questions.
* If you choose not to be in a group or have an interview, this will not change any of the services you receive from [*The Arc*/*SVC*] or may receive in the future.
* If you come to the focus group, we see that as you are agreeing to be part of the focus group. You can leave at any time if you don’t want to be part of the focus group anymore.
* What you say will be kept confidential by the staff of the project. This means:
	+ There will be someone taking notes on a computer and a recording of the session, but no one will record your name. Your name will not be connected to anything you say.
	+ We will make every effort to stress the importance of respecting confidentiality to your fellow group members.
	+ Only the staff on the project will see the notes or hear the recordings from the focus groups.
	+ Once the project is finished, the notes and recordings will be destroyed.

There will be a mandated reporter in the focus group. A mandated reporter is someone who must tell the county if someone is being hurt. A report will only be made if you share information that needs to be reported. A report may need to be made if you share information about physical or sexual abuse that has happened to someone you know who is under the age of 18 or if you were abused while under the age 18. A report will also need to be made if you say that you are thinking of hurting yourself or another person.

#### Safety

As I noted before, being in this focus group is completely up to you. If you feel that being in the focus group will make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, we suggest that you do not participate. During the focus group we will not be asking anyone to share any personal stories of violence or abuse. Again, the focus will be on your experience in trying to get help and services in the community.

If you would like to help but don’t want to be in a group, you may be able to have a one-on-one interview instead. We also want you to know that if you would like to talk to someone for support or for any other reason during or after the group, an advocate will be available in a private area.

##### FAQs

I am now going to hand out a list of frequently asked questions. I will take this document back from you unless it is safe for you to keep it. The document will provide you with answers to many of the questions you may have. However, if you have any other questions after today you are welcome to contact the project director who works for The Arc. I will give you her contact information in a moment. Feel free to take as long as you need to read through this. [*Read document to invitee or let invitee read through the document and ask any questions they have.*]

#### Registration

Now I would like to talk to you about how you can sign up for either a focus group or individual interview. I have a sign-up form. [*Hand out RSVP form, then read through the form with the individual*.]

We ask for your first name on the RSVP form. This form will go directly to the project director who works for The Arc, who will keep it locked up at all times. This way we will know that you are coming and can make sure you get what you need when you arrive at the meeting. The RSVP forms will be destroyed immediately following the meeting. There will be no record that you were there.

On the RSVP form you will see that you can agree to participate in the focus group, in an individual interview, or not participate. Again, participation is your decision.

Do you know right now if you want to participate? [*Yes/no*]

##### For Yes Responses

Do you want to be in a focus group or have a one-on-one interview?

* If they agree to be in a focus group, indicate this on the RSVP form and move onto the next section.
* If they agree to have a one-on-one interview, go over the list of optional dates/times and indicate this on the RSVP form.

##### For No Responses

[*Skip to concluding remarks.*]

#### Accommodations

Please tell us about any accommodations you need. [*Review the accommodations section on the RSVP form.*]

If you need someone to be in the room to help you during the focus group/interview, please let us know now. As a reminder, your own personal care attendant cannot be in the room with you, but they can wait outside. If you would like us to provide a PCA for you in the room, check “PCA” on the RSVP form. You can still have your own PCA at the meeting waiting outside the meeting for you. Only check “PCA” on the RSVP form if you need a PCA in the room with you.

#### Meeting Reminder Options

[*Show meeting reminder card.*] If you’d like, you can take this card with you as a reminder of the date/time of the meeting. The card has the project director from The Arc’s first name and phone number in case you think of any questions or need to reschedule. The project director’s voicemail is confidential in case you want to leave a message. Please consider whether you feel comfortable knowing that someone might see the card. Someone who sees it may ask you questions about it and about your participation in the focus group or interview. Would you like to take a card?

[*If the invitee would like the card and has agreed to participate in a focus group or interview, complete the date, time, and location directly on the card before handing it to them*.]

#### Incentives (for Survivors ONLY)

To thank you for participating, we will give you a $20 Visa gift card at the beginning of the meeting. If you would rather not take it with you at that time, a staff person can hold on to it for you and you can get it back at the end of the focus group. Refreshments will be offered during the meeting as well.

#### Concluding Remarks

Do you have any other questions? [*Complete and collect RSVP forms.*]

Thank you so much for your time.

## Recruitment FAQ Handout for Victims/‌Survivors and Parents/‌Guardians

### Accessing Safety in Hennepin County

**What is Accessing Safety in Hennepin County?**

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is a collaboration between The Arc Greater Twin Cities (The Arc), an advocacy organization for people with intellectual and intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the Sexual Violence Center (SVC), the rape crisis center for Hennepin, Carver, and Scott counties. Accessing Safety in Hennepin County has been created to improve and enhance services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence.

**What is the purpose of Accessing Safety in Hennepin County?**

The purpose of the collaboration is to strengthen the connection between The Arc and SVC. We will share resources and knowledge with each other. We will work to develop improved services that empower victims/survivors to help them heal from the effects of sexual violence.

**Why is this important for our community?**

Violence against people with disabilities occurs at an alarming rate. Women with disabilities compared to women without disabilities are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence. The violence is often more severe and lasts longer.

Additionally,

* An estimated 83% of women with disabilities experience sexual violence. Women with intellectual and developmental disabilities have among the highest rates of physical, sexual, and emotional violence by spouses, ex-spouses, boyfriends, and family members of all women with and without disabilities. (J&D Stuart, 2008).
* Approximately 25% of men with disabilities experience sexual violence (Powers et al., 2008).

**Why are both organizations committed to this project?**

The Arc and SVC are committed to improving our services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence. We want people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive the information and support they need. We will increase the awareness, skills, and comfort level of staff and others who work directly with victims/survivors of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Who has been doing the work on this project?**

Our collaboration is made up of people who work at both organizations. We have been meeting every other week for over a year.

### Needs Assessment

**Why do a needs assessment?**

We want to learn how we are currently doing with providing services. With this information, we will be able to decide what we need to do to improve our services. The best way to learn this information is to talk to the people who have received our services. We hope to learn about the strengths of both organizations, as well as what we need to improve.

**Who are we asking to participate?**

We will be conducting focus groups of survivors of sexual violence who have used services at the Sexual Violence Center and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and parents and guardians of people with disabilities who have used services at The Arc.

**Why do you need my input?**

Talking to the staff and volunteers at both organizations will only give us part of the picture. We need to talk to the people who have received our services. We are looking for information on safety, accessibility, and areas for improvement for both organizations.

### Participation

**What is expected of me?**

We would like you to participate in a focus group or individual interview on a date and time selected by Accessing Safety in Hennepin County. Participation includes answering questions from your own personal knowledge and experiences and providing any kind of ideas or suggestions you may have on how things could be better. If you participate in a focus group, we ask that you not repeat what is shared by others in your group.

**Do I have to answer all of the questions?**

You can answer or skip any of the questions that are asked. You can discontinue your participation and leave the room at any time. We hope that you will talk about how we can make changes at the Sexual Violence Center and The Arc to improve our ability to provide safe and welcoming services.

**When and where will the focus group/interview be held?**

It will be on [*date*] at [*time*] at [*location*].

**Who should I contact if I cannot come?**

Please contact the project director based at The Arc. The project director’s contact information is below. If possible, we will arrange an alternate time and date.

### Confidentiality

**Will what I say be shared with others?**

We will keep responses as confidential as possible.

1. How we will use the information:
All individual responses will be kept confidential by those running the meeting and recording notes. During the meeting there will be a note taker who will be typing information on a laptop. We will also record the sessions to help the note taker fill in any details they might have missed. Names and other personally identifying information will not be used or linked to any of the information shared. All RSVP forms and other notes and recordings will be stored in a locked file cabinet at The Arc and will be destroyed once the needs assessment has been completed. The collaboration will not keep written records of participation.
2. How other people will use the information:
All participants are asked to respect each other’s confidentiality. We ask that you do not share anything other participants say during the focus group.
3. How to protect your information:
Do not share any personal information you do not want shared with the group or others.

**What if I want to help but don’t want to be in a group?**

If possible, we prefer that you participate in a focus group. However, we respect that this is not always comfortable or possible. In such cases, we will make every effort to schedule an individual interview with you instead. An individual interview will only include you, the facilitator, and a note taker. Your participation and individual information/responses will be kept confidential (see “Are responses confidential?”) If you would prefer an individual interview, please speak with your recruiter or the project director from The Arc (see contact information below).

**How is this information going to be used?**

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County will be using the information gained from the needs assessment to create a report. We will then use this information to develop a strategic plan. The strategic plan will outline steps we will take to make our organizations better.

**Who will get the information?**

A summary of each focus group and interview will be provided to the collaboration members at both organizations while we are in the process of collecting information. As we previously stated, no identifying information will be collected or shared with anyone outside of those conducting the meetings. Once the needs assessment is complete, the collaboration members will write a summary report. This report will be read by our funder and our technical advisors. The needs assessment report will also be shared with the leadership teams at both organizations.

**What is mandatory reporting and duty to warn and how does it apply?**

You will not be asked to share stories about your own experience of violence or stories of violence involving specific individuals you may know. There will be a mandated reporter in the focus group. A report will only be made if you share information that needs to be reported. A report may need to be made if you share information about physical or sexual abuse that has happened to someone you know who is under the age of 18 or if you were abused while under the age 18. A report will also need to be made if you say that you are thinking of hurting yourself or another person.

### Safety and Accommodations

**What are the safety considerations for my participation?**

We are making every possible effort to make this process safe and comfortable for everyone. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe at any time for any reason, you may leave at any time. Because this topic can bring up intense emotions, we will have a trained advocate immediately available to you during every focus group. The advocate will be in a separate room from the focus group, and whatever is discussed with the advocate will be kept confidential, except for when we are required by law to report, based on the reasons stated above. Additionally, we will have a list of local resources should you find that you need additional support after your focus group/individual interview.

**What accommodations are available to support my participation?**

If you choose to participate, we ask that you [*work with the recruiter to complete an RSVP form/reply to this email*]. All available accommodations are listed, and you are welcome to check all that apply to you. Please feel free to contact the project director from The Arc (contact information below) if you have any questions or if you have a request that is not listed. We will make every effort to accommodate those participating.

**Can my personal care attendant (PCA) come with me?**

Your PCA is welcome to bring you, and we will have a separate room or space for them to wait for you. If you need a PCA while you are in the meeting, we can provide you with an alternative PCA. Please indicate to us that you need a PCA during your meeting in [the RSVP form/in your email response].

### Logistics

**How do I participate?**

We ask that you [*complete an RSVP form and turn it into your recruiter*/*respond to this email*] indicating that you would like to participate.

**What do I get for participating? [*survivors and people with disabilities ONLY*]**

As a thank you for your participation in the focus group or optional interview, we will provide you with a $20 Visa gift card. We will be handing these out at the beginning of the focus group/interview. If you decide to leave at any point, you can still keep the gift card no matter what.

Also, light refreshments will be provided for all focus group participants. We will not be providing refreshments for optional interviews.

**What if I lose my gift card? [*survivors and people with disabilities ONLY*]**

Once we give you the gift card it will be up to you to keep it safe. We cannot give you a new one if it is lost or stolen.

**Who do I contact if I have additional questions or concerns?**

Project Director from The Arc:

Robyn Browning

952-915-3625

robynbrowning@arcgreatertwincities.org

Your recruiter:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Recruiter contact info: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## C.1. Recruitment FAQ Handout for People with I/‌DD

**What is Accessing Safety in Hennepin County?**

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is a project run by The Arc Greater Twin Cities (The Arc), an advocacy organization for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the Sexual Violence Center (SVC), a rape crisis center. Accessing Safety in Hennepin County is working to improve services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are victims or survivors of sexual violence.

**What is the purpose of Accessing Safety in Hennepin County?**

The purpose of the project is to strengthen the connection between The Arc and SVC. We share resources and knowledge with each other. We will improve our services to empower victims and survivors and help them heal from sexual violence.

**Why is this important for our community?**

People with disabilities are more likely to be victims of violence than people without disabilities. Women with disabilities are more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than women without disabilities. The violence is often more severe and lasts longer.

* About 83% of women with disabilities experience sexual violence. Women with intellectual and developmental disabilities in particular are very likely to be victims or survivors of physical, sexual, and emotional violence from friends or family.
* About 25% of men with disabilities experience are victims or survivors of sexual violence.

**Why are both organizations committed to this project?**

The Arc and SVC are committed to improving our services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence. We want people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to receive the information and support they need. We will increase the awareness, skills, and comfort level of staff and others who work directly with victims/‌survivors of sexual violence with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Who has been doing the work on this project?**

Our collaboration is made up of people who work at both organizations. We have been meeting every other week for more than a year.

### **Needs Assessment**

**Why do a needs assessment?**

****We want to learn what we are doing well and what we need to change with our services. The best way to learn this information is to talk to the people who have received our services. With your input, we will be able to decide what we need to do to improve.

**Who are we asking to participate?**

We will hold focus groups of victims and survivors of sexual violence who have used services at SVC. We will also hold focus groups of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and parents and guardians of people with disabilities who have used services at The Arc.

**Why do you need my input?**

Talking to the staff and volunteers will only give us part of the picture. We need to talk to the people who have received our services. We want information on safety, accessibility, and things to improve.

### **Participation**

**What is expected of me?**

You are invited to be in a focus group or an individual interview on a date and time that also works for the project directors. You can answer questions from your own personal knowledge. You can share any ideas or suggestions you have on how things could be better. You must not repeat what is shared by others in your group.

**Do I have to answer all of the questions?**

You can skip any of the questions you don’t want to answer. You can also stop participating or leave the room at any time. We hope that you will talk to us about how we can make changes to ****provide safe and welcoming services.

**When and where is the focus group/interview?**

It will be on at , at .

**What should I do if I can’t come?**

Please contact the Robyn. Her contact information is on the last page. We can try to find a different time to meet if you want.

### **Confidentiality**

**Will what I say be shared with others?**

We will keep your responses as confidential as possible.

1. **How we will use the information:**The people running the meeting and taking notes will keep your responses confidential. The note taker will type on a laptop during the meeting. We will also record the meeting to help the note taker fill in anything they missed. We will not use any names or identifying information. We will lock your RSVP form and our notes and recordings from the meeting in a locked file cabinet at The Arc. We will destroy all of the files once we are done with the needs assessment. We will not keep records of your participation.
2. **How other people will use the information:**All participants are asked to respect each other’s confidentiality. Please do not share anything other participants say during the focus group.
3. **How to protect your information:**Don’t share any personal information you don’t want shared with others.

**What if I want to help but don’t want to be in a group?**

If you are not comfortable in a group, we will try to schedule an individual interview with you instead. An individual interview will only include you, the facilitator, and a note taker. Your information will stay confidential. (See the last question for more details.) If you prefer an individual interview, please speak with Robyn. Her contact information is on the last page.

**How is this information going to be used?**

Accessing Safety in Hennepin County will use the information you share with us to create a report. We will then use the report to make a strategic plan. The strategic plan will list the steps we will take to make our organizations better.

**Who will get the information?**

A few staff members at The Arc and at SVC will get a summary of each focus group and interview. We will not collect any identifying information, and only the people conducting the meetings will even know your name. Once we finish the needs assessment, we will write a report. Our funder and our technical advisors will read the report. The leadership teams at both SVC and The Arc will also get to read the report.

**What is mandatory reporting and how does it apply?**

No one will ask you to talk about your own experience of violence. No one will ask you to talk about violence involving people you know, either. There will be a mandated reporter in your focus group. They will only make a report if you share specific information that needs to be reported. They may need to make a report if you tell us about physical or sexual abuse that happened to someone you know who is under age 18 or if you were abused while under age 18. The mandated reporter will also need to make a report if you say that you are going to hurt yourself or someone else.

### **Safety and Accommodations**

**What are the safety considerations for my participation?**

We want to make this process safe and comfortable. If you feel uncomfortable or unsafe for any reason, you can leave at any time. This topic can bring up intense emotions, so we will have a trained advocate available to you during your meeting. The advocate will be in a separate room. They will keep anything you say private unless they have to make a mandated report. We will have a list of local resources if you need additional support, too.

**What accommodations are available?**

Please check off any accommodations you need on the RSVP form. Contact Robyn (contact information below) if you have questions or your accommodation is not listed. We will try hard to meet your needs.

**Can my personal care attendant (PCA) come with me?**

Your PCA can bring you and for you outside the meeting room. If you need a PCA during the meeting, we can provide you with an alternative PCA. Please tell us if you will need a PCA during your meeting.

### **C:\Users\disabilitiesgrant\Downloads\noun_27582.pngLogistics**

**How do I participate?**

Please complete an RSVP form and turn it in to your recruiter to let us know that you would like to participate.

**What do I get for participating?**

To thank you for your help, we will give you a $20 Visa gift card. We will hand these out at the beginning of the meeting. If you decide to leave, you can still keep the gift card. We will also have snacks for focus group participants. We will not have snacks at interviews, however.

**What if I lose my gift card?**

Once we give you the gift card it is your responsibility to keep it safe. We cannot give you a new card if yours is lost or stolen.

**Who do I contact if I have more questions or concerns?**

Robyn Browning

952-915-3625

robynbrowning@arcgreatertwincities.org

Your recruiter:

Recruiter contact info:

Icons from the Noun Project.
Page 1: Sergey Demushkin, Krisada, Luis Prado. Page 2: Alejandro Santander, Krisada, Jessica Lock, Lemon Liu. Page 3: Chris Dawson, public domain, Cyrille Le Floch, Sergey Novosyolov, Alexandr Razdolyanskiy. Page 4: Mister Pixel, iconoci, Sclera, Sclera. Page 5: Kevin Laity, Bybzee, Phil Laver. Page 6: Gregory Sujkowski, Sclera, Sclera, Tommy Lau. Page 7: Milky – Digital Innovation, public domain.

Sources of statistics:

Powers, L. E., Curry, M. A., McNeff, E., Saxton, M., Powers, J., & Oschwald, M. M. (2008). End the Silence: A survey of the abuse experiences of men with disabilities. *Journal of Rehabilitation*, *7(4)*, 41-53.

Stuart, J. & D. (2008). Recognizing and Responding to the Vulnerability Trail for People with Developmental Disabilities. Arc resources.

## RSVP Form

|  |
| --- |
| **RSVP Form**Please complete this form and return it to the person who recruited you. All information you provide is confidential.**First name ONLY: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Please check one of the following:** \_\_\_\_\_I wish to participate in a **focus group** on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date) (time) (location)\_\_\_\_\_ I wish to participate in a **one-on-one interview**. My interview will takeplace on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date) (time) (location) **[Must be selected from list provided.]**\_\_\_\_\_ I do not wish to participate.**Meeting reminder options:**\_\_\_\_\_ I would like a meeting reminder card.\_\_\_\_\_ I would like a meeting reminder from the person who recruited me. Best way to contact me (phone/email): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Best time to contact me: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Is it safe to leave a message (yes/no): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |

### Accommodations Request Form

| **Accessibility Accommodations** |
| --- |
| Please put a check next to any accommodation that you would like during your focus group/interview. Check all that apply for you. |
| **Check Here** | **Accommodation** |
|  | Alternate personal care attendant (PCA)\* |
|  | Service animal |
|  | American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter |
|  | Note taker |
|  | Transportation coordinator |
|  | Orientation to facility |
|  | *For individual interviews only*:Other language interpretation (specify language): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | Alternative written materials (specify large print, simple language, visual aids, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | Other assistance with reading (specify: audio or personal help, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | Seating arrangements (specify: near door, chair without arms, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | Restrooms (specify: large stall, gender-neutral, etc.):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | *For focus groups only*: Dietary concerns or food allergies (specify): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
|  | Other requests:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |
| \*For confidentiality, your own PCA is not permitted in the room during focus groups or interviews.Questions: Email Robyn Browning at robynbrowning@arcgreatertwincities.org or call her at 952-915-3625. |

## Reminder Card

| **Meeting Reminder**Contact Info:RobynProject Director952-915-3625**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_****Time: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| --- |

# Focus Group and Interview Materials

## Facilitator Scripts

### Note: Check-In Process

Prior to participants entering the room, the facilitator will greet each participant and ask for their first name. The purpose of this is to link each individual with any accommodations they have requested.

For focus groups, the facilitator will give each participant (except for parents and guardians) a $20 Visa gift card. The facilitator will then introduce each participant to the assistant, who will help get them seated and show them to the refreshments.

### Script for People with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

#### Overview

Hello and welcome. My name is [*insert name*], and I will be running the group and asking you questions today. Thank you so much for coming. I want to tell you about who we are and why we are here today. My job is to work on a project for The Arc Greater Twin Cities and the Sexual Violence Center, or SVC. The Arc and SVC have come together to help people with developmental disabilities who are victims of sexual violence. Does everyone know what SVC is? [*If yes, skip to next paragraph; if not:*  SVC is a rape crisis center that educates people, raises awareness, and supports victims of sexual violence.]

We are here today to find out from you what you think about services you have gotten in your community. We want to know what is helpful and not helpful for you when you around services. We are asking you these questions so we can learn what we can do better to help the people we serve. We are also holding focus groups with victims of sexual violence who have used services at the Sexual Violence Center. We are also holding a focus group for parents and guardians of people with developmental disabilities who have used services at The Arc.

We will use the information you give us to create a plan for how to make our services better. We want to make services at The Arc and at SVC safer, more welcoming, and more accessible. We need your help to learn what is working for you and what is not working for you.

#### Introductions

*Facilitator*: As I said, my name is [*insert name*]. I’ll be the facilitator and I will be asking you the questions. I would also like to introduce the others who are helping with the group today.

##### For Focus Groups Only

Assistant: Hi, my name is [*insert name*], and I am here as the assistant. I will help in case anybody needs anything. Please ask me for any help you need, like leaving the room or getting more food.

*Note taker*: Hello, my name is [*insert name*], and I will be the note taker. I will be typing on a laptop about what people say during the group, but I will not write down anyone’s name or who said what.

*Advocate*: Hi, my name is [*insert name*], and I am the advocate today. If you have any bad or upsetting feelings or memories during the group, you can talk to me. We want you to feel comfortable and safe during our talk today. We will be talking about services in your community. If for any reason you want to leave the room and talk to the advocate, you can do so before, during, or after the meeting. I will be available in [*give location*].

##### For Focus Groups Only

You can ask [*insert assistant’s name*], the assistant, to help you find me.

##### For Focus Groups Only

You can ask [*insert facilitator’s name*], the facilitator, to help you find me.

We also have a list of free services from the Sexual Violence Center and other local resources available for you. You can take it if you want.

*Facilitator*: Please ask us for any help you need.

#### Housekeeping

If at any time during our talk you want to leave the room, please do so. The restrooms are [*give location for men’s, women’s, and/‌or gender-neutral restrooms*].

##### For Focus Groups Only

Our assistant [*insert name*] can help you find them. If you have a PCA and you need their help, please ask [*assistant’s name*] to take you to them. You can take more food or ask [*assistant’s name*] for help getting food whenever you want. This group will last for about 1½ hours.

##### For Interviews Only

I can help you find them. If you have a PCA and you need their help, please ask me and I will take you to them. This interview will last about one hour.

#### Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality, and Safety

I want to go over some important information about confidentiality. If you have questions, please ask me.

1. You can leave at any time for any reason.
2. I will be asking lots of questions about your ideas and thoughts. You can skip any question you don’t want to answer.
3. I’m not going to ask you to share any information about violence or abuse that has happened to you or anyone you know. Please do not share stories about violence or abuse. We only want to know about what works for you and what doesn’t when you try to use services in your community.

If you *do* want to talk to somebody about abuse or violence that has affected you, you can talk to our advocate, [*insert* advocate’s *name*], at any time today. [*Insert advocate’s name*] is in [*give location*]. We also have a list of free services from SVC and other local resources that you can take if you want.

1. The people working on this project will keep what you say safe and confidential. The information we collect from all of the focus groups and interviews will go into a final report. We will share our report within The Arc Greater Twin Cities and the Sexual Violence Center, and we will send it to our funders and advisors. If we put anything you say in our report, we will not use your name. We will only say what group you were in. Also, the services you receive from The Arc Greater Twin Cities or the Sexual Violence Center will not change because of anything you say.
2. There is a mandated reporter here. A mandated reporter is someone who has to tell the police or child protection when they learn about certain kinds of danger in someone’s life. This person will only make a report if:
	1. You share specific information about physical or sexual abuse that has happened to someone you know who is younger than 18 years old;
	2. You share specific information about abuse that happened to you when you were younger than 18 years old;
	3. You share specific plans to hurt yourself or someone else.
3. To summarize, if you stay here and take part in our conversation, you have to agree to:
	1. Take part in a(n) [*focus group/‌interview*];
	2. Let us record and write down what you say;
	3. Let us write things you say in our report;
	4. Let us use what you say to make changes at both The Arc Greater Twin Cities and the Sexual Violence Center.

##### For Focus Groups Only

I also want to talk to all of you about your responsibility to each other.

1. We need you to respect each other’s privacy. You must not talk about anything that other people said in this group after you leave. Do not tell other people who else was here in this group.

We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and opinions openly, but we can’t guarantee that everybody here will keep their promise to respect your privacy. Please remember to be careful when you choose what to say.

1. We need you to respect what each person has to say, even if you don’t agree with it. Please do not interrupt other people before they finish talking. Take turns and let everybody talk who wants to talk.

If you agree to these things, please tell me or show me you understand by either nodding your head, giving me a thumbs up, or telling me some other way that you agree to this.

What questions do you have before we start?

Remember, you can leave at any time if you change your mind or for any other reasons. We are about to begin the discussion, so you can leave now if you want, or stay if you agree to the four things I just listed.

#### Introduction to the Questions

I will ask you some questions to guide our conversation. There are no right or wrong answers.

##### For Focus Groups Only

I’m not going to call on people. You can choose to answer or not answer any of the questions. I will wait after each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak gets a turn.

[*Proceed to focus group and interview questions (see Appendix G).*]

#### Concluding Statement

Thank you so much for helping us. Thank you for answering our questions and sharing your opinions and ideas. If you want more information, please ask one of us before you leave today, and we will be glad to help. [*Return gift cards to anyone who asked the assistant to hold on to them.*]

### Script for ‌Survivors and Parents and Guardians

#### Overview

Hello and welcome. My name is [*insert name*], and I will be running the group and asking you questions today. Thank you so much for coming. I want to tell you about who we are and why we are here today.

The purpose of our group today is to find out from you what you think is helpful or not helpful when you are trying to get services in your community. We are specifically interested in what you think based on your experiences as a [*survivor*/‌*parent or guardian of a person with an intellectual and developmental disability*].

I’d like to provide you with a brief overview of who we are and why we are here. As mentioned during your recruitment, The Arc Greater Twin Cities and the Sexual Violence Center have come together to look at how both agencies are currently serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence. We are conducting a needs assessment in order to learn what both organizations can do better to respond to survivors with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

##### For Survivors

We are also holding focus groups with people with intellectual and/‌or developmental disabilities who have used services at The Arc and one with parents and guardians of people with intellectual and/‌or developmental disabilities who have used services at The Arc.

As a reminder, The Arc Greater Twin Cities is an advocacy organization that informs, assists, and advocates for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities like Down syndrome, autism, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, cerebral palsy, and other conditions to achieve full and satisfying lives.

##### For Parents and Guardians

We are also holding focus groups with survivors who have used services at the Sexual Violence Center and people with intellectual and/‌or developmental disabilities who have used services at The Arc.

As a reminder, the Sexual Violence Center is a rape crisis center that educates, raises awareness, pushes for systems change, and directly supports victims of sexual violence of any disability status who are at least 12 years old.

With your input, we will create a plan for how to improve our services for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have been subjected to sexual violence. Our goal is to make services at both agencies safer, more welcoming, and more empowering. We are asking for your help in identifying what you feel is working well and what you feel we could do better.

#### Introductions

*Facilitator*: As I said, my name is [*insert name*]. I’ll be the facilitator and I will be asking you the questions. I would also like to introduce the others who are helping with the group today.

##### For Focus Groups Only

Assistant: Hi, my name is [*insert name*], and I am here as the assistant. I will help in case anybody needs anything. Please ask me for any help you need, like leaving the room or getting more food.

*Note taker*: Hello, my name is [*insert name*], and I will be the note taker. I will be typing on a laptop about what people say during the group, but I will not write down anyone’s name or who said what.

*Advocate*: Hi, my name is [*insert name*], and I am the advocate today. If you have any bad or upsetting feelings or memories during the group, you can talk to me. We want you to feel comfortable and safe during our talk today. We will be talking about services in your community. If for any reason you want to leave the room and talk to the advocate, you can do so before, during, or after the meeting. I will be available in [*give location*].

##### For Focus Groups Only

You can ask [*insert assistant’s name*], the assistant, to help you find me.

##### For Interviews Only

You can ask [*insert facilitator’s name*], the facilitator, to help you find me.

We also have a list of free services from the Sexual Violence Center and other local resources available for you. You can take it if you want.

*Facilitator*: Please ask us for any help you need.

#### Housekeeping

If at any time during our talk you want to leave the room, please do so. The restrooms are [*give location for men’s, women’s, and/‌or gender-neutral restrooms*].

##### For Focus Groups Only

Our assistant [*insert name*] can help you find them. If you have a personal care attendant and you need their help, please ask [*assistant’s name*] to take you to them. Help yourself to more food at any time, or ask [*assistant’s name*] for help. This group will be about 1½ hours.

##### For Interviews Only

I can help you find them. If you have a personal care attendant and you need their help, please ask me to take you to them. This interview will last about one hour.

#### Consent, Mandatory Reporting, Confidentiality, and Safety

I would like to review some important information about confidentiality. If you have questions, please be sure to stop me and ask.

1. We will be asking for your ideas and opinions. We are assuming that you are freely choosing to volunteer your time and participate since you came here today. You may leave at any time if you change your mind about being here or if you simply decide you want to leave.
2. I will be asking a variety of questions. You may choose to answer or not answer any of the questions.
3. We will not be asking you to share any information about any form of violence or abuse that you or someone you know may have experienced. Please do not share stories about violence or abuse. We only want to learn what works and doesn’t work for you when seeking services in your community.

However, if you would like to talk to someone about any experience of violence, as a reminder we have an advocate, [*name*], who is in [*room location*] who you can talk to at any time today. We also have a list of free services from SVC and other local resources available for you to take with you.

1. The people working on this project will keep the information that is collected safe and confidential. This means that what you say here today will be recorded and linked to the type of group you are in but not linked to you individually. In our report, if we quote something you say, we will not use your name. No names will be used in anything that [*note taker’s name*] is taking down or in any written reports. Also, there will be no changes in the services you receive from either organization because of what you say.
2. The information collected from all of the group discussions and interviews will be put into a final report. This report will go to our collaboration, our funder and our grant advisors.
3. There will be a mandated reporter in the focus group. A report will only be made if you share information that needs to be reported. A report may need to be made if you share information about physical or sexual abuse that has happened to you while under the age 18. The other thing I need to mention is that if you make a specific and real threat to harm yourself or someone else, we may need to report this.

##### For Focus Groups Only

I also want to talk to all of you about your responsibility to each other.

1. We ask that you respect the privacy of others. Please do not talk about anything that is said in our group after you leave today. Please do not tell others who else participated in the group. We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and opinions. With that, we cannot ensure that your peers here will keep what is said confidential after you leave here. Therefore, we encourage all of you to be aware of what you choose to share today.

We want everyone to feel free to share their ideas and opinions openly, but we can’t guarantee that everybody here will keep their promise to respect your privacy. Please remember to be careful when you choose what to say.

1. We ask that you respect what each person has to say even though you might not agree with it. We also ask that you allow everyone to finish speaking before you speak. Finally, we ask that you take turns and allow everyone to speak who wants to.

In summary, by being here today, you agree to:

1. Participate in a [*focus group*/*interview*]
2. Have your comments recorded and documented in writing
3. Have your comments used in our report
4. Have your comments used to make changes at both agencies

If you agree to these four items, please tell me or show me you understand by either nodding your head, giving me a thumbs up, or indicating in some other way that you understand and agree to this.

What questions does anyone have before we get started?

As a reminder, you may leave at any time if you change your mind about being here or if you simply decide you want to leave. We are about to begin the questions so if you do not want to participate, you are welcome to leave now with no consequences.

#### Introduction to the Questions

I will be asking you some questions which will help guide the conversation. There are no right or wrong answers.

##### For Focus Groups Only

I won’t be calling on people, and you may choose to answer or not answer any particular question. I’ll be sure to pause in between each question to make sure that anyone who wants to speak has a chance.

[*Proceed to focus group/‌interview questions (see Appendix G).*]

#### Concluding Statement

Thank you so much for being here today. We appreciate your help in answering our questions and sharing your opinions and ideas. If you would like any additional information, please ask one of us before you leave today, and we will be glad to help. [*Return gift cards to anyone who asked the assistant to hold on to them.*]

## Focus Group and Interview Questions

### Questions for People with I/‌DD

We are going to ask you some questions today to learn about your experience as a person with disabilities. Please think about your answers in terms of being a person with a disability. We know you all have different experiences and unique identities. But please answer questions to focus on how having a disability affects you.

1. To start, how do you find out about services that you can use? (For example, how did you find your doctor?)
	1. Where do you think it would be good to share information with people with disabilities about services they can use? (Prompts: religious bulletins, library, stores, Internet?)
	2. Does anybody help you find out about services you can use? (Prompts: staff, friend, family, co-worker, counselor, case manager, or someone else)?
2. Sometimes, agencies do things that make it harder for people with disabilities to find out about services they can use. What kinds of things do agencies do that make it hard for you to get information?
	1. What about accommodations? Accessibility? Information in different formats?
	2. What can agencies do to help you find out about services you can use?

Now, I’m going to ask you to think about a place in your community where you use services where you feel comfortable, where you trust the staff. For example, a place the staff makes it easy for you to talk about what you need and what problems you have. [*Pause*.] Does everyone have a place they are thinking of? Good. Think about this place for the next few questions.

1. First, please think about the people who work there. What do they do to make you feel comfortable?
	1. Do they do a good job? If so, why do you think that? If not, why not?
	2. Now think about the building. What about the building do you like?
		1. Is it easy to get around? If yes, what makes it easy to get around?
		2. Is it easy to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it easy?
	3. What else makes you feel comfortable at that place?

Now, think about a place in your community where you use services where you feel uncomfortable and where you do *not* trust the staff. For example, a place where it is hard for you to talk about what you need and what problems you have. [*Pause*.] Does everyone have a place they are thinking of? Good. Think about this place for the next few questions.

1. Please think about the people who work there. Do the people that work make you feel uncomfortable?
	1. What do they do to makes you feel uncomfortable?
2. Now think about the building. Is there something about the building or place that you don’t like?
	1. Is it hard to get around? If yes, what makes it hard to get around?
	2. Is it hard to find what you are looking for? If yes, what makes it hard?
3. Is there anything else that makes you feel uncomfortable?

Now I will ask you some questions about getting help. We all need help sometimes, but it can be hard to ask for help. For these questions, please think about the last time you needed help from someone, for example someone who works at The Arc. Some examples of things to ask for help on are: help with calling someone, help reading something, and help getting somewhere.

1. What made it easy for you to ask for the help you needed?
	1. Did that person ask if you needed help?
	2. Do you like it when people ask if you need help?
	3. Is there anything else that these people do that makes it easy to ask for help?

Now we are going to do an art project to answer the next two questions. [*Assistant distributes paper and art supplies*.] On the paper in front of you, please draw your answer to the question. You will have five minutes to draw before the next question. If you want any help, tell [*assistant’s name*] or [*note taker’s name*] and one of them will help you.

1. When you go somewhere for services and someone really understands you and your disability, what is that like?

[*Five minute pause*.] Who would like to share what they drew?

Please draw your answer to the next question. You will have five minutes to draw before the next question.

1. When you go somewhere for services and people don’t understand you or your disability, what is that like?

[*Five minute pause*.] Who would like to share what they drew?

1. Do you have anything else to tell about how to make things better for people with disabilities when they go somewhere for services?

### Questions for ‌Survivors

We are going to be asking you some questions today to help gain your insights as survivors of sexual violence. We kindly ask that when answering these questions to please think about these questions through the lens of being a survivor of sexual violence. We recognize and appreciate that you all have varied and dynamic experiences that shape your unique identities, but as much as possible during our limited time together today, please try and focus on the unique lens of being a survivor of sexual violence only.

1. I’d like to begin by asking you about how you learned about services available to survivors of sexual violence.
	1. Where are good places to distribute or provide information about the services available? (For example: Yellow pages (online or hard copy), religious bulletins, library, retail stores, Internet search?)
	2. In your opinion, which of these ways would be the best choice when reaching out to survivors of sexual violence to let them know of services available to them?
2. Now, I’d like to ask you to think about what agencies or service provides do to help make your experience positive when accessing services?
	1. What about the physical space/location was positive?
	2. What about the staff behavior, competency, and knowledge were positive?
	3. What about confidentiality?
	4. What about privacy?
	5. What about the overall atmosphere, comfort level, and approachability was positive?
	6. What about materials/resources?
3. On the other hand, what has an agency or service provider done that contributed to making any part of your experience with them a negative one?
	1. What about the physical space/location was negative?
	2. What about the staff behavior, competency, and knowledge were negative?
	3. What about confidentiality?
	4. What about privacy?
	5. What about the overall atmosphere, comfort level, and approachability were negative?
	6. What about materials/resources?

We’d now like to spend some time gathering your insights on the concept of safety and comfort, as they are often important considerations for survivors of sexual violence when accessing services and disclosing their experiences of sexual violence. We want to explore with you what organizations and service providers do or don’t do to help you to feel safe and comfortable disclosing your experiences of sexual violence, or contrarily, unsafe or inhibited in disclosing your experiences of sexual violence.

1. What does safety mean to you?
	1. What have service providers done to help you feel safe?
2. As a follow-up, what have organizations or service providers done that have helped you to feel comfortable disclosing or talking about your experience of sexual violence?
3. What made you feel as if you could trust the organization or service providers enough to disclose?
4. What made you feel comfortable in sharing your experience of sexual violence within the organization?
5. On the contrary, what have organizations or service providers done that have made you feel unsafe?
6. What did they do that prevented you from trusting them or having confidence in them?
7. What made you feel uncomfortable and that you could not share your experience of sexual violence with the organization?

For the next series of questions, I’d like to focus on gaining your insights on the concept of confidentiality, as this too is often an important consideration for survivors of sexual violence when accessing services and disclosing their experiences of sexual violence. We want to explore what confidentiality means to you and how organizations can consider their practices of confidentiality when serving survivors of sexual violence.

1. To begin, what does confidentiality mean to you?
	1. How important is confidentiality when you’re seeking or receiving services?
	2. In what instances would it be okay to share identifying information and the details of your experience of sexual violence with other organizations?
		* After signing a one-time release of information as part of an intake process, allowing the organization to release your information to anyone they deem necessary?
		* Or do you prefer to be asked prior to each time your information is going to be released, providing you with a choice as to whom you want the information released to?
		* Or, are you fine with an organization sharing your information at any time?

Now that we have learned about what safety, comfort, and confidentiality mean to you as survivors of sexual violence, we’d like to gather your insights on what organizations in the community can do to make you feel safer and more comfortable when accessing their services. (Services may include routine doctor’s appointments, public transportation, libraries, etc.)

1. What would you like community service providers (such as doctors, therapists, or community agencies) to know about how to best support survivors of sexual violence?
	1. What is the one thing you consider most important that needs to be addressed regarding services to survivors of sexual violence?
2. Do you have any other feedback for us about what the ideal service delivery system would look like for individuals that are survivors of sexual violence?

I’d like to ask you specifically about services you have received at SVC. Please keep in mind that your answers will not have any impact on any future services that you may receive from SVC.

1. What does SVC do well?
2. What could SVC do better?
	1. Services
	2. Communication
	3. Staff
	4. Facility
	5. Policies
	6. Attitudes
	7. Accessibility/accommodations
	8. Advocacy

### Questions for Parents and Guardians

We are going to be asking you some questions today to help gain your insights as parents or guardians of individuals with disabilities. We kindly ask that when answering these questions to please think about them through the lens of being a parent or guardian of a person with a disability. We recognize and appreciate that you all have different experiences that shape your unique identities. But as much as possible during our time together today, please try and focus on your role as a parent or guardian of an individual with a disability.

1. I’d like to begin today by asking you about how you find out about services for your child or the person for whom you are guardian available to you in your community. (For example, how did you find your doctor?)
	1. Where are some places that you think it would be good to share information with parents and guardians of people with disabilities on services that are available to them? (For example: Yellow pages (online or hard copy), religious bulletins, library, retail stores, Internet search?)

Sometimes, agencies do things that make it difficult for people with disabilities to get the information they need about services that are available to them.

1. When you are looking for services, what are you concerned about?
	1. Communication [*For example: agency websites, newsletters, presence on social media*]
	2. Staff [*For example: reception services, front-line staff like advocates and case managers*]
	3. Facility [*For example: the physical building, access to bathrooms, adequate meeting space]*
	4. Services
	5. Attitudes
	6. Accessibility/accommodations
	7. Advocacy
	8. What qualities do you look for in services?
2. What kinds of things can agencies do to show they care about you and the person you seek services on behalf of?
	1. To show they respect your perspective?
	2. To show they value your input?
	3. To make you feel welcome?
3. What risks do you worry about with the person you seek services on behalf of?
4. What safety challenges have you faced?
5. How do you deal with these?
6. What would help you in addressing these issues?

I’d now like to ask you specifically about services you have received from The Arc. Please keep in mind that your answers will not have any impact on any future services that you may receive from The Arc.

1. What does The Arc do well?
	1. Communication
	2. Staff
2. Do you think that staff are well prepared to work with people with disabilities?
	1. Facility
	2. Services
	3. Attitudes
	4. Accessibility/accommodations
	5. Advocacy
3. What could The Arc do better?
	1. Services
	2. Communication
	3. Staff
	4. Facility
	5. Policies
	6. Attitudes
	7. Accessibility/accommodations
	8. Advocacy

Now, we would like to ask you about service providers who do not specialize in providing services to people with disabilities.

1. What should non-disability service providers know about working with people with disabilities?
2. With parents and guardians of people with disabilities?
3. Is there any other information you would like us to know?

# Other Materials

## Community Resource List

Both The Arc and SVC have a vast network of support resources for those who seek our services and support. The following contains contact information for organizations that can provide basic resources in the event of a participant having an immediate need during or following a focus group or interview. This is by no means an exhaustive list and other resources can be identified by either agency.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **The Arc Greater Twin Cities** | 952.920.0855 |
| **Sexual Violence Center** | 612.871.5111 (crisis line) |
| **Immediate Danger** | 911 |
| **Crisis Connection** | 612.379.6363 |
| Crisis Connectionis a nonprofit agency that provides 24-hour crisis counseling by telephone. Their mission is to create a place in which no one in crisis will be alone. Anyone can call from throughout Minnesota to receive support at any time. Services offered include client counseling, suicide prevention, family abuse prevention, mental health, counseling, and referrals. |
| **COPE** (Community Outreach for Psychiatric Emergencies) | 612.596.1223 |
| 24 hour emergency services for any adult in Hennepin County who has symptoms of a mental health crisis and needs immediate support. |
| **Hennepin County Acute Psychiatric Services**(Hennepin County Medical Center) | 612.347.3161 |
| HCMC's Acute Psychiatric Services center serves people in emotional crisis with 24-hour, seven-day-a-week crisis counseling, assessment, and referral. More than 42,000 calls and drop-in visits each year are handled by the Acute Psychiatric Services staff of psychiatrists, social workers, and psychiatric nurses. |
| **Ramsey County Adult MentalHealth Urgent Care** | 651.266.7900 |
| Walk-in crisis services for adults (ages 18 and older) in Ramsey, Dakota, and Washington Counties. Offers an on-site team of psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, and trained peer support staff is ready to provide crisis services in a caring, supportive environment. |
| **Regions Hospital Crisis Program** | 651.254.1000 |
| Walk-in crisis services available in the Emergency Center from a licensed social worker. |
| **Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery** | 763.591.0400 |
| The Crisis Nursery supports families in crisis 24 hours a day, 365 days a year through our free, voluntary services that include a 24 hour crisis helpline, crisis counseling, overnight residential child care, and support groups. |
| **Sexual Offense Services of Ramsey Co.** | 651.266.1000 |
| Free and confidential services for victims of sexual violence, their partners, families, friends and other concerned persons. Offers a 24 hour line for support and counseling. |
| **Tubman Crisis & Resource Line** | 612.825.0000 |
| Tubman helps women, children and families struggling with relationship violence, substance abuse and mental health. Throughout the Twin Cities, Tubman provides safe shelter, legal services, counseling, elder care resources, youth programming and community education while guiding and sustaining individuals and families on the journey from chaos and fear to healing and restoration. The 24 hour crisis and resource line offers help and resources. |
| **Minnesota Domestic Violence Crisis Line** | 1.866.223.1111 |
| The Minnesota Day One Crisis Hotline assists with getting help, getting safe, and getting support. One call connects you with an advocate trained in supporting victims and survivors of [domestic violence](http://dayoneservices.org/domestic-violence/)**,** [sexual assault](http://dayoneservices.org/sexual-assault-2/)**,** [human trafficking](http://dayoneservices.org/what-is-human-trafficking/) who can help you find a shelter and the services you need in your area. |
| **Cornerstone Advocacy Services** | Crisis: 952.884.0330Business: 952.884.0376 |
| Cornerstone serves adults and children traumatized by unhealthy, destructive relationships based on power and control. Cornerstone provides comprehensive services and support for victims of interpersonal violence and their families in Bloomington, Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park, Crystal, Eden Prairie, Edina, Maple Grove, Richfield, Robbinsdale, and St. Louis Park. Cornerstone provides safe housing to anyone in imminent danger, regardless of whether or not they live in their target cities. |
| **Vulnerable Adult/Child Protection Reporting** | Hennepin County:612.348.8526Ramsey County:651.266.4012 (day)651.291.6795 (after hours) |

1. As described by the Office on Violence on Women [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. In the state of Minnesota, sexual assault advocates provide crisis counseling but are not regularly referred to as counselors. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. All SVC advocates receive training on supporting victims/‌survivors with I/‌DD; however, they do not specialize in serving this population. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Includes time for OVW approval of needs assessment plan. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)